110. Medical Examination of School Children.

Mr. N. Kumaran B. A., B. L., (Member, T. I. C., Quilon) referred to the progress made in education during the past 4 years as being the result of the progressive policy followed by Government and hoped that the same liberal policy would be pursued in years to come until every child of school-going age received the benefit of Elementary education.

National health and physical fitness were among the most potent factors making for national efficiency. Labour, *i. e.* human capacity to work, was one of the ingredients of national wealth. The individual must have the bodily vigour to make the best use of the education he has received and must have health, so that he may utilise all his intellect and physical powers for increasing the national wealth. Any scheme of education which did not recognise the importance of national health or provide for its maintenance could not be regarded as ensuring national efficiency. There was a general impression that the Government had not recognised the above principle in their broad and costly scheme of education. The number of pupils attending departmental and recognised schools in the State was increasing and was bound to do so for many years to come. The important question was whether the condition of those schools was satisfactory from the point of view of health and sanitation. It was an admitted fact that the class rooms were overcrowded, especially in departmental schools, in spite of the restrictions laid down by the Education Code in the matter of admission. A visit to any such school would show that a large number of the children were not having the best of health and that their condition required looking into. Defects of vision, of hearing, curvature of the spine, paleness and general debility due probably to poverty of blood or want of proper nourishment would be easily discernible to an observant eye. It could not be doubted that the discovery of ill-health in children at the earliest opportunity possible was a matter of vital importance to themselves and their parents. A medical examination of school children would bring to light a very undesirable state of affairs with respect to their health and the attention paid to it. It would enable the children concerned and their parents to take whatever steps they might be advised to take in order to combat the disease with success. Without such detection by an expert the pupils and their parents might not generally even suspect the existence of any disease and consequently it would have taken deep roots in the system before its presence was discovered and treatment applied. So far as the Madras Presidency was concerned, the Director of Public Instruction brought to the notice of Government the necessity for a thorough medical inspection and a scheme was sanctioned under G. O. No. 1494, dated the 14th November 1918. The Member, therefore, suggested that a similar medical inspection might be ordered in Travancore and added that the question of expenditure should not stand in the way of Government.

Dewan's reply.—The Durbar Physician and the Director of Public Instruction are being consulted in the matter and the question will be considered on receipt of their reports.

111. Need for State aid in regard to the promotion of the health and welfare of School Children.

Mr. M. K. Ananthasiva Aiyer (Member, T. I. C., Alleppey) spoke about the inadequacy of vaccination work in schools in the interior parts and wanted better arrangements to be made for the vaccination and re-vaccination of school children. He endorsed the views of Mr. N. Kumaran, Member, T. I. C., Quilon, about the necessity of medical inspection of school-children. He next dwelt on the necessity of establishing hostels at least in High Schools and explained how the school-pupils without such hostels suffered in health and morals.

The Member then recommended the creation of Education Boards and suggested the appointment of Honorary Inspectors in each locality where there was a school, their duties being the inspection of the school and general management of the institution. One industry at least should be taught in each school.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

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